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NEA/ARP FOR ANDREW MACDONALD
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TAGS: [ECON](#) [EAID](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [YM](#)

SUBJECT: YEMENI POVERTY LEVELS HIGHEST IN WAR-AFFLICTED
AREAS

REF: A. SANAA 2124

[B](#). 08 SANAA 1918

[1](#)1. Summary. The poorest country in the Middle East, Yemen is particularly affected by poverty. 34.8 of the population lives below the poverty line as defined by a UNDP index; 45 percent of the population lives on less than two dollars a day. The real losers when it comes to poverty are the war-afflicted, northern governorates of Amran and Sa'ada. End Summary.

[1](#)2. With an economy more similar to sub-Saharan Africa than to the rest of the Arabian Peninsula, Yemen suffers from levels of poverty rivaling some of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs). 34.8 of the population lives below the poverty line as defined by a UNDP index; 45 percent of the population lives on under two dollars a day. Poverty is particularly concentrated in rural areas, where 84 percent of the poor live. High levels of poverty have basic life consequences: malnutrition is rampant, and death during childbirth is common. According to UNICEF's Chief of Communication and Information Naseem-ur-Rehman, 250 Yemeni children die per day from malnutrition alone, and twelve Yemeni women die every day in childbirth.

[1](#)3. According to UNDP and the ROYG's Social Fund for Development (SFD), levels of poverty differ significantly across the governorates. With 71 percent of the population poor, poverty reaches the highest levels in Amran, a governorate bordering the war-torn Sa'ada governorate. Malnutrition is at its worst in Sa'ada, where 60 percent of the population is malnourished, according to UNICEF. (Comment: Poverty levels in Sa'ada are lower than in geographically isolated Amran due to Sa'ada's connection to trade along the Saudi border. Because of the ongoing conflict, poverty has mounted in Sa'ada, perhaps to levels rivaling those in Amran. End Comment.) In general, levels of poverty in southern Yemen are similar to levels of poverty in northern Yemen, excluding the war-afflicted governorates of Amran and Saada.

[1](#)4. Comment: Despite popular perceptions in southern Yemen that they are worse off than their northern neighbors, in fact, levels of poverty do not differ significantly between northern and southern Yemen. The real losers when it comes to poverty are the war-afflicted, northern governorates of Amran and Sa'ada. Lack of basic services and goods in Sa'ada due to the ongoing Houthi conflict not only contributes to instability, but also adds to plight of the poor in the governorate. End Comment.

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